















# All India Congress Committee

SWARAJ BHAWAN,

ALLAHABAD

## NOTE

The Congress Jubilee Brochures written in popular style are meant to educate the general public and furnish them with a working knowledge of the current Indian political and cultural problems. The Congress as an organisation may be said to be in general agreement with the conclusions of the different authors, although it may not be possible for it to subscribe to every detail of what has been written. There may be minor points of difference here and there for which we as publishers, or the Congress as an organisation, can take no responsibility.

J. B. KRIPALANI,

*General Secretary.*



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## PREFACE

The organisation, strength and discipline of the Public Service is becoming daily more and more important in every part of the world, in proportion as the nature and extent of the functions of the State are widening. Public Service is now no longer regarded, either as the close preserve of a privileged class, or the refuge of all those social misfits who cannot sustain the struggle for existence in a competitive society. In Education or in Sanitation; in Defence or in Industry; in Transport, Communication, Insurance or Banking, Public Service is rapidly becoming coterminous with the whole civilised society in every community. The problem of Public Service in India is important as it is complicated. A peculiar complication is caused by the presence of an alien bureaucracy, practically monopolising still all places of power and profit in the Indian Public Service. This complication becomes still more acute, when one compares the scale of emoluments of our Public Servants, with the average *per capita* wealth in the country. But the main problem remains in India, as severe and complicated as anywhere else in the civilised world. The moment, therefore, seems particularly opportune when the premier political organisation in the country celebrates the demi-centenary of its existence to cast a bird's-eye glance at the whole question of the Public Service in India.

With the flight of years and the growth of public consciousness, with the change in economic environment and the evolution of social ideals, there has naturally been a change of viewpoint even in the Congress demand in respect of the Public Services. From the Indian evidence before the first Public Services Commission over fifty years ago, to the latest manifestation of the same desire, there is a wide gulf. Indianisation of the personnel still remains, no doubt, in the

forefront of the desiderata of our national revival. But the programme of Indianisation, even in the departments of State where the principle is accepted, nominally at least, is complicated by the need to give the numerous but backward Minorities their due in the public service of the country. Selection by open competitive tests, and the demand for specialised skill in technical departments of the national governance, have accordingly, had to be subordinated to the exigencies of politics in such a divided country as India. Another difficulty, and one more of fundamental importance to the future governance of the country,—concerns the scale of emoluments,—Salaries, Pensions, and allowances of all sorts. These were originally fixed, in the British regime, on considerations which can now no longer hold valid, as they perhaps did 150, or even 80, years ago. The country has realised, not only the need for competent, qualified, independent public service; but also the disproportionately small ability of the people to remunerate that service on the prevailing scale. It is this new aspect of the problem, which has inspired the Congress resolution of 1931, fixing the *maximum* of any public salary at Rs. 1,000 per month; and it is, also, this phase of our national development, which has dictated the many reservations and safeguards in the new constitution which render it wholly unworkable and which the country has unanimously condemned.

It is, of course, impossible to review, within the space of such a pamphlet, the whole of this vast and complicated problem, which is, besides, daily obtaining new shades of importance. With the progress, for instance, of really Responsible Ministries, the role of the Public Servants would become more, not less, important. And in proportion as the political head, the Minister in charge of a department of state, is ignorant or inexperienced, by no means an unlikely

contingency under the new dispensation, the power of the departmental chief in the permanent service to advance or hinder the national march, will become all but irresistible. It is to appreciate this manifold problem, that the writer has endeavoured to piece together a few facts, comparisons, and reflections, which he trusts the new masters of India will find time to digest.

8, LABURNUM ROAD:  
*Bombay, 10th December, 1935.* }

K. T. SHAH.

### **Other English Works by the Same Author**

1. **Sixty Years of Indian Finance** (2nd. Edition, 1927).
2. **Trade, Tariffs, and Transport in India** (1923).
3. **Indian Currency, Exchange, and Banking** (1923).
4. **Governance of India** (in collaboration with Miss G. J. Bahadurji.)
5. **Constitution, Functions and Finance of Indian Municipalities** (in collaboration with Miss Bahadurji) 1925.
6. **Wealth and Taxable Capacity of India** (in collaboration with Mr. K. J. Khambatta).
7. **The Russian Experiment** (1927).
8. **Post-War Germany** (1928).
9. **Federal Finance in India** (1930).
10. **SPLENDOUR THAT WAS 'IND.** (1930).
11. **Eleven Points of Mahatma Gandhi** (1930).
12. **Ethics of Public Debt** (1930).
13. **Report, Vol. II. Congress Select Committee, on India's Foreign Obligations** (1931).
14. **World Depression (1933)—Madan Memorial Lectures.**
15. **Post-War Price-Movements (1935)—Delhi University Lectures.**

# PUBLIC SERVICES IN INDIA

## I. Introductory : Reasons for Discussing the Problem

The problem of the Public Services in India has been discussed so often, that there would be no excuse for discussing it again if there is no new angle to present it from, no new solution to suggest. Prof. D. R. Gadgil's excellent and erudite brochure on "The Salaries of Public Officials in India" (Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Publication No. 1, 1931) makes a thorough analytical and comparative study of the burden on India's national resources and public economy, involved in the disproportionately high salaries paid to public officials in the country, which would render any further study of the same problem superfluous.

Nevertheless, since the resolution of the Karachi Sessions of the Indian National Congress (1931) which appointed a Select Committee to enquire into the question from the standpoint, particularly, of so revising Public Salaries as to fix the maximum for any post in the country at Rs. 500 per month, a new interest has been aroused, and the purely economic standpoint, as contradistinguished from the political standpoint comprised in the term *Indianisation*, has also attracted public criticism in no small measure. There are besides, aspects of this problem, and reasons for discussing it afresh to day, which, the present writer believes, have not been adequately considered by the numerous Committees and Commissions, and private enquirers, who have studied this thorny question from their own particular standpoint. These reasons are, in the main :—

- (a) The enactment of a new Constitution for India. This lays down very stringent provisions for the protection, and safeguard of the public servants, that would

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- (a) The enactment of a new Constitution for India. This lays down very stringent provisions for the protection and safeguard of the public servants, that would



render the necessary economies in the conduct of our national administration impossible. The Public Servant, particularly of the superior ranks, has always been protected in India, even against the best interests of the people of the country. But whereas in the past, ever since Public Service came to be organised in the present regime, the protection afforded to the Public Servant was not without some regard to the best interests of the Government and the people of the country, to-day the very basis and genesis of that protection is changed. There is an element of distrust of the Indian people which shows itself in the attempt to secure the Public Servant against the authority of the country's responsible Government. When the superior services were almost wholly non-Indian, and the Government also of the same complexion, the nature and extent of the protection needed were not incompatible with the requirements of discipline and the needs of good government. But to-day, it is alleged that effective power in the Government of the country is to be transferred to the responsible ministers of the popular will; it is realised also that the cost of administration is so heavy that no minister can carry out any programme of national betterment without an effort at cutting down drastically these costs; and that though the public service may have to be progressively Indianised, those members of it who are non-Indians and must remain in service for a long while to come, must be effectively protected against the imminent menace of financial retrenchment.

- (b) We shall review these new constitutional provisions in respect of the Public Services hereafter. Another reason why the problem of the Public Servant needs

to be discussed afresh lies in the changing structure of modern society. The functions of society's organised representative, the State, have been widened considerably and the ideals of social intercourse and human destiny have changed radically. With the advent of Industrialism, and the ever growing links of international commerce, civilised society to-day cannot afford to remain, each people in its own cell, intent upon working out in isolation its own destiny. For good or for evil, modern commerce has broken down the ancient ideal of individual self-sufficiency and social exclusiveness. Co-operation is indispensable, and yet conflict inevitable in competitive commercialism organised on nationalistic groups. Under those conditions, the representative and embodiment of every community,—the State,—has necessarily to take a closer, keener, and more constant interest in the conduct of that commerce, and the welfare of that community. The result is an inevitable and indispensable expansion of the functions of the State,—the tasks of Government,—which we see manifested in our own country by an incessant increase in the number of Public Departments, and Posts in the public service. The Victorian ideal of the Policeman State, has no place in present day conditions wherein fierce international competition exposes every community, unmindful of constantly safe-guarding its own interests, to risk of utter annihilation. This altered conception of the State, and the increase in its activities naturally leads to a ceaseless addition to the cost of Government a major portion of which is often for utterly barren objects. Economic as well as intellectual progress demands its own sacrifice in the shape of a steadily increasing public expenditure

for a steadily expanding field for collective ministrations. Even those who would not accept that idea of civilised society, in which the State becomes the universal provider of goods as well as services,—and in which, therefore, every body would have to be a public servant of some sort,—must recognise this tendency of their age. They must realise that ancient and venerable institutions, evolved in an epoch of unrestricted individualism, are steadily assuming a role and a complexion increasingly more socialistic, such as the Post Office and the Transport system, Banking and Credit organisations, public instruction, public charity, and national commerce. Because of this tendency of our age and our present mechanised industrial system, because of the growing vogue of standardisation and mass production, because of intense and unremitting Nationalism in matters economic, the state, and its concrete manifestation, the Government,—has increasingly to assume functions and discharge duties which a hundred years ago would have been deemed the worst disservice.

Mankind, further, has changed insensibly the ideals of its mutual intercourse and final destiny, which unavoidably engender a totally new outlook on the role and importance of the Public Servant in any civilised community. Assuming that our modern mechanised industry and intricate international commerce have come to stay; and that human co-operation for the advancement of the race generally is an essential condition of that progress, we have to provide an army of public servants,—not only for the physical defence of the community against wanton aggression, or the normal government of the

country, but also for securing and maintaining a high level of public health, public Intelligence, and public efficiency. The Medical and Nursing Services have been nationalised in many a modern community working a collective system of Social Insurance; and even though the juristic services may still remain the plaything of parasites, the educational services and spiritual ministrations in the highest ranks have had to be nationalised, or collectivised just as much as the Defence Services and Banking Facilities.

These new services are, indeed, not everywhere functioning without a hitch or a hesitation. But they token a new view of human life and destiny, which must needs alter the role of the Public Servant and the importance of his work. From being a boss, a parasite and an exploiter, he is being slowly turned into a productive agent, a faithful Minister of the public weal, and a true agent and servant of the national will. In India, we are, of course, still very far from this metamorphosis of the public servant, who is still largely an alien, temperamentally a boss, and functionally a parasite. But, even so, we cannot remain for ever apart from the main stream of our age; and unless we would not stimulate the current of our national progress, unless we would not infuse our public guides and helmsmen with the desire for real service, nor expect of them a modicum of efficiency in their appointed tasks, we must reconsider fundamentally the problem of our public services, complicated and vexatious as it may be.

- (c) The third reason why the question of the Public Services in India needs to be radically reconsidered, lies in the transition between Bureaucracy and

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Democracy. India cannot yet be said to be well on its way to a working Democracy. Sceptics would have good reason to doubt if she will ever attain that goal. But here, too, the course has been set and the goal defined, however distant it may be. Indian public opinion, uninformed and unenterprising as it may be, would now no longer support an undiluted and irresponsible Bureaucracy. It may be that the ideal of Democracy may be attained more in intention than in practice, more in abstract principle than in working detail. Nevertheless, the tendency of our age is not only to increase the number and variety of public servants, but also to make them more amenable to public control, and less liable to exploit, oppress or terrorise those they are set to teach, to guide, to support, and advance. The transition must be accomplished from unresponsive and utterly un-responsible Bureaucracy of to-day, to a gradually more amenable, more understanding and sympathetic Public Service responsible to the chosen Ministers of the popular will. There are advantages, indeed, of a well-trained Bureaucracy, functioning in perfect accord with the public will, which it would be futile to deny, or suicidal to seek to escape. Because some public servant may be insolent or autocratic, unresponsive or unsympathetic, we must not do away with the whole body of organised, disciplined, and well trained public service. The spirit of the times and the needs of our country would force us steadily to increase its strength and widen its functions. We must seek to make it more national and more sympathetic, more understanding the country's needs and more amenable to its peoples' wishes. Given this desideratum, the problem

of public service in India wears a wholly different aspect.

- (d) The last, but not the least important consideration why the entire problem of the Indian Public Services needs to be basically reconsidered lies in the peculiar circumstances of India. The recruitment for Public Service in India, under present conditions, cannot be attempted exclusively with an eye to efficiency, and fitness for the job in hand. A minimum standard of efficiency and previous training may, no doubt, be insisted upon, as regards all aspirants for the public service. But given the varying scale of the educational advancement of the several communities; and assuming the justice and legitimacy of the demands of each important community to have a proportionate share in the country's public service, it is impossible for any Indian statesman to ignore the rights of minorities in this behalf. The present Government has, no doubt, given solemn pledges to assure a definite share of public service to each important minority in the public service of the country; and, no matter what the real opinion of the majority community on the intrinsic merits of such arrangements, they will not eschew those pledges altogether. Even when Swaraj is achieved, the Indian people may not be able to abolish these special reservations for minorities without the gravest risk of internal disruption.

Adequate representation of minorities in the Public Services is, however not necessarily incompatible with the demands of efficiency, integrity, and independence in the Service,—though, given the widely differing state of general education in certain communities of India, the danger of inefficiency is



not entirely imaginary. Prescribed tests of competence and efficiency may be enforced side by side with definite reservation of certain proportion in the public service to particular communities. Nevertheless we must run the risk, if risk there is. Our task must be, not to deny the minorities what they regard as their legitimate dues, but to reconcile these claims with the demands of public efficiency and integrity, and thereby to make our country's services both popular and really helpful in advancing the public weal.

## II. Constitutional Provisions and Safeguards for Public Services in India

Statutory provisions, however, in the new constitution make the position of the services impregnable to popular assaults, impervious to national sympathies.

Perhaps the most important provision on this subject is to be found in Sections 12 and 52 of the Act, which make "the securing to, and to the dependents of, persons who are or have been members of the public services of any rights provided or preserved for them by or under this Act and the safeguarding of their legitimate interests" a *special responsibility* of the Governor-General in the Federation, and of the Governor in the Provinces. Wherever a matter is declared to be among the special responsibilities of the Governor-General, or the Governor, that officer may act on "his individual judgment," i. e., without reference to his constitutional advisers or responsible Ministers. In such matters, the only responsibility of the executive head of the Government is towards the Secretary of State (ss. 14 and 54), and to the Governor-General as regards the provincial satraps. The privileges of the Public Servants being made

a Special Responsibility of the executive head of the Government, that officer can and may defeat any schemes of national policy which he deems to be incompatible with the interests of the Services. But even these higher authorities cannot issue directions which would require the Governor-General or the Governor to do anything contravening the governing idea of this Act. The Services thus attain a position of paramount importance, overriding all other considerations of good government, efficient government, or economical government.

This position of transcendental importance is assigned to the Public Services in no other constitution in the British Commonwealth or other democratic countries. Even where they are recognised and treated as lions, they must behave as lions under the throne, to use an old Baconian expression. The British Civil Services are the model of silent efficiency, and the envy of democratic countries. Their real power and influence are never known to outsiders, and yet never denied by those who have come into the slightest touch with them. And yet their discipline and subordination, their willingness to carry out with the same zeal any policy determined upon by Parliament, their relative inexpensiveness are characteristics so well known that England is truly the best governed country in the world, and yet the most democratic. In India we cannot give our public servants a superconstitutional importance, which has been accorded to them in the new constitution without grave injury to our national sovereignty. For they are placed in a position in which they may, if they so choose, defy with impunity the constitutional authority in the land, and frustrate all its measures for the economic conduct of the country's administration. Under ss. 33-4 in the Federal Government, and ss. 78-9 in the Provincial Governments, the financial statements of the country must provide for sums "charged upon

the revenues of the Federation" or of the Provinces as the case may be. These sums are not subject to the votes of the Legislature; and among them a very prominent place is given to the salaries and allowances of the executive head of the Government, his Counsellors, Advisers and Ministers, the Advocate-Generals, Judges of the Federal and of the High Court; and such sums as are directed by the Governor-General, or the Governor, "as being necessary for the due discharge of any of his special responsibilities". This expenditure in connection with the salaries of the higher ranks in the Public Services being thus excluded [s. 247(4)] from the purview of legislative control or supervision, and also from the Ministerial responsibility, the high officials of Government need show no concern for the views or needs of the Government under whom they serve, for they will have nothing to fear for such hostility or insubordination.

The basic constitutional provisions regarding the admission regulation and conditions of public service are contained in ss. 232-277 inclusive. Sections 232-239 deal with the Defence Services, ss. 240-250 with the Civil Services generally, and the remainder with some special departments of the Public Service like the High Commissioner's staff, Judicial and Political officers, &c. Schedule 3 to the Act fixes the salary and allowances of the Governor-General and Governors at very nearly the figures as now prevail. It is interesting to note that under s. 232 the pay and allowances of the Commander-in Chief, "and the other conditions of his service shall be such as His Majesty in Council may direct"; and under s. 233 specified appointments in the Defence Services may be made by the King directly. This reduces considerably the authority of the Government of India Act, and yet in no way reduces its burdens. For these high salaries are deemed by public opinion in India to be utterly insupportable and excessive. The pay, pensions,

and allowances of persons serving, or who have served, in H. M.'s forces are absolutely outside the purview of a Legislative vote (s. 237). India must, therefore, not even dream of effecting economies in this direction of curtailing the inflated salaries and excessive allowances of her military octopus, so long as the present constitution endures (ss. 237-38).

Though appointments to the Civil Services, or civil posts under the Crown in India are to be made tenable during H.M.'s pleasure, (240) provisions regarding discipline, censure, degradation, suspension, or dismissal of such public servants and their rights of appeal, &c. are so rigid, and their rights of complaint, appeal, compensation, &c. are so extensive, that disciplinary powers over these pet children of Government are bound to prove shadowy, if they exist at all (s. 240).

Appointments to the Civil Service proper, the Indian Police Service, and the Indian Medical Service (Civil), will be made by the Secretary of State (s. 244), who is also authorised to make appointments to any other services, established after the coming into force of the new Act, which he deems necessary to recruit suitable persons for posts in connection with the discharge of the Governor-General's discretionary authority.

To all other Civil Services or posts appointments may be made by the Governor-General for federal posts, or by the Governor for provincial posts (s. 241). The conditions of service in these posts shall be regulated by rules made by the Governor-General, or by the Governor as the case may be (ibid). No rule, however, which would make the conditions of service to any persons already in such service disadvantageous to such persons can be made and an ample margin for appeal against any disciplinary action has been provided for the benefit of such servants. Provincial and Indian Legislatures

are entitled to pass laws for the regulation of the remainder of the field of public services; but no act of any Indian Legislature can limit or abridge the power of the Governor-General or of the Governor to deal with the case of any person serving in a civil capacity in India; nor can any case be so dealt with by any authority as to prove less favourable in its effects on the public servant, than the rule or the Act ordains.

Special provisions of this nature are also made (s. 243) as regards the conditions of service in the subordinate Police ranks in the Provinces. Certain posts, again, are, under rules made by the Secretary of State, to be *reserved for members of the Civil Services* (s. 246); and no such post can be kept unfilled for more than 3 months, nor can be held by any one but a person appointed by the Secretary of State in the first instance, nor held jointly with any other post. Appointments, promotions, and transfers in the case of these reserved posts could only be made by the Governor-General acting "*in his individual judgment*", in the case of federal posts, and by the Governor, similarly, in the case of posts in any province. Conditions of service of such officers are to be regulated by rules made by the Secretary of State, as regards Pay, Leave, Pensions, and Medical Attendance; and as regards other matters by the Secretary of State, if he thinks fit, or by the Governor-General or the Governor, according to the nature of the post. Pensions of such officers are non-votable. [s. 247 (5)]. Finally, sections 258 and 259 safeguard rigidly the rights of existing officers to posts in which they were serving before the commencement of this Act, so that no such post could be abolished without more than adequate compensation, nor could their salaries and allowances be left in any danger.

The initial admission to the public service, solely on ground of proved qualification as indicated by a competitive

examination, is not very rigidly provided for in the Act. The Public Service Commissions, established under s. 264, may conduct examinations (s. 266) for appointment to federal or provincial posts, or otherwise help in recruitment to such services. Nothing definite is laid down in the Act itself, as regards the prevalence of examinations for initial selection and appointment of persons to be appointed by the Secretary of State. If he so chooses, that officer may dispense with competitive examination altogether, at least so far as the binding character of the present Act is concerned. Very likely competitive public examination may either be altogether dispensed with, or their severity very much relaxed, so far appointment to that proportion of posts in the Public Services which is reserved for minorities is concerned. The holding of suitable public tests for initial appointments in the numerous departments of the public service of such a vast country as India may be a most difficult task; and the difficulty must be admitted to be enhanced by the demands of minorities. But, even so, the Act provides for not one national Public Services Commission; but there may be as many as all the Provinces. In the U.S.A., since the day they have established entrance through competitive examination for the "Spoils System", the Civil Service Commission holds, as they are needed, some 1,700 different kinds of examinations for recruitment to the various grades of Public Service; and is aided in this task by some 4,700 local boards of examiners, in addition to its own huge staff of trained experts for the purpose. About 250,000 persons compete at these examinations every year, and 40,000 to 50,000 from them are annually successful in the competitions. For a country with half the population of British India and a hundred times larger field for profitable private employment, these figures are much too eloquent not to be significant even to the most reactionary. The difficulties of

India would be insignificant, and the efficiency of public service immensely advantaged, if we would substitute appropriate examinations for official patronage in recruiting for our public services. And that ideal can be realised without any disregard to the rights of minorities, or violation of the pledges given to them.

### **III. Conditions and Requirements of Public Service**

A glance at these statutory provisions would suffice to show that all considerations of national economy and official discipline have been rigidly subordinated to the demands of security, and prospects in the Public Service to those who are already there. When we cast a glance to the actual scales of pay and a host of allowances, not to mention a still larger army of indirect advantages, in the higher branches in the Indian Public Service, we would realise why these provisions have been rigorously insisted upon by all shades of British opinion concerned in prescribing the new constitution for this country.

The ideals, however, a well-ordered Public Service for any country do not demand such a permanent and irremovable mortgage of public resources to only one section of a country's nationals. Much less would they justify such a wholesale sacrifice of all considerations of national economy to an alien and non-responsible Bureaucracy. No one would demand that public service should be purely honorary. Public Servants, just like any other human beings, must live; and if they are not assured a reasonable living as remuneration for their service, they would eke out their existence in some other ways, far more deadly to the country as a whole. Honorary service, taken as a whole, is seldom efficient, and never disinterested. Everybody must recognise

that the Public Servant must be allowed a reasonable standard of living, and, in the interests of the commonweal itself, he should be so secured in his office as to make him independent of the vagaries of politics, and immune from easy temptation to corruption, given the most elementary standards of public propriety. But we cannot consent to that exaggeration of the just demands of Public Service, which would sacrifice all other interests to satisfying and keeping contented a highly privileged body, largely of foreign extraction and generally of alien sympathies.

The following statistics would perhaps make the foregoing remarks more intelligible. Of the total net collection by way of Income Tax in 1933-34 of Rs. 14.40 crores, Rs. 2.63 crores were deducted at the source from salaries paid by Government. The aggregate of the salaried income taxed in the same period, all over the country, was 92.51 crores, and the total tax collected thereon was Rs. 4.12 crores. Nearly 62% of the salaried income of the country was thus derived from Government source alone! Putting the same thing differently, of the aggregate taxable income of the country, Rs. 231.20 crores, nearly a fourth was dependent upon Government! This does not, of course, include the income from Government salaries, which are below the taxable minimum; and as such would exclude all incomes of troops and camp-followers, Indian as well as British, railway, postal and educational employees of the lower grades, and the clerical staff practically in all departments.

Sir George Schuster, then Finance Member of the Government of India, said in his Budget Speech for 1931-32:

“Taking the Civil Departments, exclusive of Railways, the total pay of all the officials of Government, British and Indian, high-paid and low-paid, Central and Provincial, amounts to just over 57 crores. Of



this sum, the Central Government's share is about 16 crores, and the Provincial Governments' about 41 crores. This total is distributed between the gazetted officers on the one side, and what are called "establishments" on the other. The term "establishments" covers all the clerical and lower-paid staff. Roughly speaking, with a few exceptional cases, it may be said that this part of the staff includes posts with pay ranging to a maximum of about Rs. 500 per month.....Taking these together, the total cost.....of officers, British and Indian, Central and Provincial, all together, and including leave pay, amounts to 16 crores, of which the Central Government's share is just under 4 crores, and the Provincial Governments' just over 12. Incidentally, I may mention that out of this total, the cost of British officers amounts only to Rs. 6½ crores."

Sir George, however, excludes all "Establishments" salaries, even if they come under the Income Tax Law. He does not include the Military and Railways salaries, which, if added to the total given by him, would swell the Public Salary Bill to well over 120 crores per annum. And even this figure does not include Pensions charges, which may add another 10 to 15 crores, reckoning all ranks and departments of the public service. Nor is it clear if those innumerable allowances paid to Government officials under one pretext or another, are included in the total presented by Sir George Schuster as the cost of the public service of the country. We fancy that cost would not be much under Rs. 200 crores, per annum, if all the elements computable and paid in money were included. The sum total of India's national wealth, at present prices, could not be much over Rs. 1,000 crores per annum. The Public Servant costing nearly 20% of the national income, and supporting less than 5 millions, or, about 2% of

the population in British India, must be deemed to be an insupportable luxury, even if he gives full value for his cost!

But even this consolation is denied to India. Compared to any other civilised country in the world; or tested in the light of any reasonable standards of efficiency in service,—as attempted, in some parts of their Report, by the Indian Retrenchment Committee 1922-23,—the public servant in India is far too costly in comparison even of the services rendered. Their desire for security in their tenure of office is legitimate and reasonable; but if it becomes the means, as it very often does, of removing every incentive to effort, originality, or distinguished work by the public servant, his security of employment and immunity from party vagaries in a democratic country would have been purchased at too great a cost to the general well-being of the community collectively.

Apart from security and efficiency, the public interest requires that there should be a reasonable degree of integrity in public servants. In fact, the very high original cost of such services was fixed specifically in order to secure immunity from temptation in the public official in the discharge of his duties. The Britisher, who until a few years ago, entirely monopolised all posts in the superior branches of the Public Service in India, was (between 1793-1853) held to be so peculiarly liable to corruption or abuse of his official position in India; and the stories of the company's "Nabobs" gave such serious point to this argument, that scales of pay were initially fixed at disproportionately high level to insure the alien official in high position against bribery or corruption. Corruption in high places is even today not unknown in India, as several disclosures in the postwar years but too poignantly proved. But assuming, for the sake of argument, that this device succeeded in achieving

its objective, the system thus evolved continued even when the Britisher's temptation to exploit his official position was very much undermined; and when the Indian recruit to the Public Service could not possibly urge this plea to demand the same scales of pay. A brief experiment was tried to differentiate in the scales of pay on grounds of colour; but the inherent injustice and inevitable mischief of such a means of securing a measure of economy in the public administration were so obvious that there is, at the present time, very little discrimination in scales of pay allowances to public servants on grounds of colour exclusively. The Indian and the Britisher are thus equally costly and onerous to the national economy; and perhaps, the Indian imbibing ideas of life and imitating standards of living from his British confrere, is even more clamorous for maintaining the present scales of remuneration than the Britisher who is becoming daily more conscious of the dangers of unrestrained cupidity.

The Indian has, or ought to have, none of the excuses that the Britisher could even now urge, with a semblance of reasonableness, which might support such excessive rewards for such mediocre service. He cannot plead enforced exile from his home and compulsory separation from his dear ones; he cannot urge the heavy cost of living and educating his children abroad, nor urge the rigours of an alien clime as among the special factors demanding specific compensation in rupees, annas, pies, even granting, without a glance at the absurdity of such arguments, that these factors could be compensated for in money. A new class of costly parasites is thus being formed in India, which, being entrenched in a specially privileged position, strongly fortified by constitutional safeguards will hang as a deadly millstone round the people's neck so long as the present system lasts. The injury worked by this millstone is all the greater because the vested

interest created by an accident of our history has deeply infected the more vocal elements in the populace. The policy of Indianisation has, nowadays, very little economic argument in its support, whatever the political value of such a slogan. For the high-placed Indian servant of the State is thoroughly Europeanised in his living and in his outlook on life.

The loudest champions of economy in national administration, moreover, when they come to power, will, by force of imitation, insist upon the same scales of remuneration in public service as they have frequently condemned in the foreigner in our country's service.

### COMPARATIVE COSTLINESS OF THE INDIAN PUBLIC SERVICES

Measured merely in terms of money, and taking only such incidents or conditions of Public Service as are computable in cash, the Indian Public Service is demonstrably the most costly in the world. It is costlier than any other, if we compare merely the salaries figures; it is costlier if we contrast it with the average national income; it is costlier if we consider the value received in exchange, both in the shape of the work done, and the national interests advanced by our public servants. Almost in every superior post, the new recruit commences with a salary of Rs. 350 per month rising by the inevitable course of seniority to a dead maximum of Rs. 2250 per month; and most likely to Rs. 4000 per month including all allowances or incidental advantages. This scale applies mainly to the Civil Service proper; but that the Indian Medical or Defence Services is not much lower. Provincial Services begin relatively lower and end also, nominally, at a lower level. But the fair standard for comparison is not the provincial but the Indian scale; and that includes the largest number of best paid posts,

The following Table, taken from Prof. D. R. Gadgil's illuminating brochure already referred to, needs no comment to any student of this subject.

*N. B. All Figures are in Rupees, and represent the Annual Salary.*

Name of Country	National Income per Capita	Wages of unskilled Urban Labourer	Lowest Clerical Salary	Highest Administrative Salary	Proportion between	
					3 & 4	4 & 5
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
S. Africa	...	...	1,866	21,338	...	1:11
U. Kingdom	1,240	1,333	1,266	40,000	1:30	1:32
Canada	1,420	2,620	1,650	27,400	1:10	1:17
U. S. A.	1,850	2,950	3,125	27,400	1:9	1:9
Germany	520	1,140	1,110	14,960	1:13	1:13
Japan	295	675	650	8,800	1:13	1:14
India	74	240	360	48,000	1:200	1:133

Prof. Gadgil has given his own Note as to his sources of comparison, and the method of such compilation, and so no more need be said here on that account. But, since his Pamphlet was prepared (1931), India's per capita income must have fallen considerably, and could not, at present prices, be much above Rs. 35 or 40 per annum. Still, the highest salaries remain at the same old level! The disproportion between the average national income and the highest administrative salary, as adopted by Prof. Gadgil, becomes much more glaring; and that between the average worker's wage and the highest administrative salary follows the same line. Mr. Gadgil, again, takes the highest salary normally realisable as that of the Secretary's salary, which is not necessarily the highest to which an official in the Public Service could normally rise to, Salaries of Members of

Government, if not of Provincial Governors, or Generals Commanding, if taken into account, even if we leave out the salary of the Viceroy, the disproportion would be still further emphasised. Again, if account were taken of the numerous Allowances, Overseas Pay, Leave Contribution, Exchange Compensation, Houses, Servants and Travelling concessions, not to mention the intangible advantages of public service; the costliness of this country's Public Service would be more easily imagined than analysed statistically, and explained dialectically.

### LEAVE AND PENSIONS

The privileges of the superior branches of Public Service in India, in regard to Leave and Pensions, are the most liberal that could be found anywhere else in the world. Apart from the very large number,—nearly 25 per annum,—of gazetted Public Holidays; apart from special or sectional holidays, allowed in addition to members of particular communities in respect of their religious or similar holidays; apart from Casual Leave (20 days in all, and 10 days at a stretch in a year) also in addition to these Holidays, there are numerous kinds of leave on full or average pay open to public servants in India, which materially reduce the actual period of service rendered by this privileged class to the country. The ordinary Leave on full or average pay, admissible in one lump to the extent of 8 months, is allowed at the rate of 5 months for every 22 months of service or duty done. In most European countries on the other hand the ordinary Public servant would get no more than a fortnight or month at most on full pay every year, without any chance to accumulate his leave, and with nothing like the number of usual holidays and Casual Leave permitted in this country. Then there is sick leave and study leave, at varying rates of pay; and also leave on half pay for special reasons. During Leave,

again, there are some special advantages, e.g., exemption from the Indian income Tax for such portion of the Leave Salary as may be drawn out of India; and payment of a given proportion of that salary at specially favourable rates of exchange,—i. e. 20 pence for every rupee of leave pay, as against the standard rate of 18d per Rupee. These advantages are so considerable, that, to give but one illustration, officers of the Indian Education Service can take their vacation in Europe, without any additional cost to themselves, despite high travelling charges. Needless to add, many departments have long and regular annual vacations, aggregating from 3 to 4 months every year, during which they are entitled full pay for no service.

Even apart from these privileged departments of public service, no public servant in the superior branches need render, out of normal life-service of some 30 years, more than 23 years of actual service, not counting the deductions on account of casual leave and ordinary holidays. This means, that for every 100 men needed, under normal conditions, to conduct the business of the Administration, we must employ a staff of at least 140, whereas other countries, conducting their administration on more economical lines, would need no more than 10% over the active strength of public service.

The Pensions Charges are even more a drain than Leave salaries and allowances. No important department of public service makes its own contribution, nowadays, to the provision of a retiring, superannuation, or Invalid Pension. Contributions to the Family Pension Funds stand on a different footing,—though, even there, the Funds receive substantial supplements from Government. Even the Civil Service proper, which used formally to contribute at the rate of 4 per cent. towards a Pensions Fund, giving out to each retiring servant a fixed Pension of £1,000, irrespective of

rank or pay at the time of retirement, is now exempted from that burden; and the pension is made a net charge upon Government. The amount also of the Public Services Pension has been increased, without increasing either the length of service required to earn a Pension, or the amount of work rendered during the period of the service to justify such a concession. While the retiring age in most of the civilised world is fixed at 65, and the active service rendered by an average officer before retirement on Pension thus varies from 40 to 45 years, in India the maximum service is fixed at 35 years, the ordinary age for retirement from service at 55, and the average active service theoretically rendered for earning a full Pension may be from 25 to 28 years at most.

Pension is calculated normally at the rate of  $1/48$ th for every year of service, subject to a fixed maximum varying in the superior ranks from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 7,000 per annum; and, as regards the Civil Service proper, from £1,000 to 1,500 in the case of those happy few who rise to be Governors of Provinces. Pensions to highest judicial officers are allowed after 12 years of service, and the active age limit for serving the State and earning a Pension is, in their case, fixed at 60. Pensions, finally, if paid outside India, escape and will be exempt altogether from the Indian Income Tax, and thus deprive the Indian revenues of a legitimate yield of nearly one crore per annum, even if such withdrawal of Capital and experience from the country was not taxed at a specially discriminating rates, such as they apply to Unearned Income in Britain, (s. 272).

The tale of Pensions is not ended when we have considered the Superannuation of Retiring Pensions. The Proportionate Pensions and Invalid charge; compensatory allowances for posts abolished; the right to commute Pensions, all make a formidable total burden utterly unrelieved by any corresponding advantage to the country.



#### IV. Recruitment and Promotion

As already observed, the best guarantee for securing a measure of competence and efficiency in the Public Service, and for avoiding the intolerable abuses of Patronage or the "Spoils" system, is to make the initial admission to high posts in the public service conditional upon the successful passing of a competitive test. The higher branches in the Indian Civil Service used to be recruited, since 1853, by competitive examination, held originally exclusively in Britain; but since 1921, in this country as well. This example was followed in many departments; but the peculiar requirements of many other departments were held to excuse such examinations in other departments.

Of late, the tendency is markedly towards an abolition, or at least a restriction, of such competitive tests; and the introduction of the principle of special safeguards and reserved seats to minorities has further intensified the same tendency. The interests of Public Service are, therefore, sacrificed on the altar of sectional demand; and the tendency is emphasised by the constitutional provisions already cited, restricting the authority to make transfers and promotions within the Service, once it has been recruited. Even the liberal rights of complaint and appeal allowed to the Public Servant is an index of the distrust with which the responsible Indian Government of the future is viewed by the authors of this Constitution. Hence the discipline, integrity and efficiency of the Indian Public Service of the next generation would be saved from complete decadence only by a miracle. If the vested interests of special minorities would only perceive the true needs of the country as a whole, they could, without sacrificing an iota of the privileges and safeguards accorded to them, still join in a universal demand to make all public service appointments conditional

upon the passing of a requisite test of prescribed efficiency ; and agree to allow the necessary powers of discipline, transfers and promotions to the responsible Ministers, subject to the rights of complaint and appeal to higher authority if need be. The competitive public test for admission to Government service must, it should be added, be designed, not to produce a body of omniscient supermen as seems to be the intention of the present tests, but men or women suitably qualified by previous training for the particular class of jobs they seek. More than one examination may have to be held, according to the varying requirements of the several departments or provinces ; and the superior Civil Servant must no longer be deemed competent to serve in any capacity as Trade Commissioner or Police Commissioner, Auditor General or Managing Director of the Reserve Bank, Railway Agent or Post Master General, Judge, Magistrate, or Executive Councillor.

The evil effects of all these privileges and high emoluments of the Public Service in India are not confined to the financial strain they involve upon the country's national economy, though even that is very considerable. They lead to an artificial standard of living among certain classes, whose example is inevitably copied by the rest of the people, not because they or the country's productive resources and social institutions could afford such a luxury, but because the dazzling standards of these favoured few render their imitation psychologically inevitable.

The disparity, moreover, between the salaries of the higher branches and wages in the lower strata, even of the public service, is so great, that there is nothing in common between the superior officer and his subordinate colleagues. And, of course, between the official and the average citizen, there yawns a gulf, material as well as cultural, which it is

impossible to bridge, so long as these excessive and insupportable scales of remuneration for public service continue. Those, however, who aim at securing equality among citizens of the same country, and who oppose in principle to any form of the caste system, cannot but view such developments with the utmost misgivings.

### ALLOWANCES

The Public Servant's salary is not the only part of his total income in India, nor often even the most important. The Overseas Allowance, ranging upto £30 per month, is of course the most notorious, and frankly a discriminatory addition to the ordinary salary, allowed mainly to officers of European domicile. They are also allowed, in the course of their service, 4 First Class Passages to and from India. They also benefit from that other special allowance, called the Exchange Compensation, which threw the burden of the mistakes of Government in handling the currency of the country upon its unfortunate people, by giving special favourable rates of exchange for remittance of given portion of salaries outside India. Even after the Exchange has been fixed, this advantage continues to be afforded to the public servant of non-Indian domicile, at a cost to the country, which it is not easy to estimate exactly. The total annual cost of all concessions, including those in regard to passage and remittance, but without reckoning the loss to Indian revenue due to exemptions from Income Tax of salaries or pensions drawn outside India, was estimated by the Lee Commission at Rs. 1½ crores. This would give a rough idea of the magnitude and incidence of such burdens.

Of the allowances given in common to both Indian and non Indian officers, the Travelling Allowance has caused the greatest single drain. The Inchcape Committee estimated the Travelling Allowance paid by the Government of India

alone to be Rs. 140 lakhs per annum in round terms. If to these we add the similar allowances under Provincial Governments and Railways, the aggregate Bill on this account would not be much under Rs. 5 crores.

These allowances have, since that time, been slightly reduced ; but, even so, and taking into account the increase in the number of posts and departments, the aggregate figure cannot even to-day be much smaller. Not the whole of this amount is the necessary expenditure involved in the course of travelling on public business. Government servants notoriously make money for themselves out of such allowances, by travelling a class lower than that for which they are allowed to charge the public purse, or by availing themselves of such concessions in travelling as the several transport agencies in the country allow. These are, of course, legitimate or recognised means of saving from such allowances. It would not be proper, in such a work as this, to make a mention of numerous less legitimate devices by which such allowances might be turned into additional source of income to such public officials. The only reform in this direction that we could suggest, would be to abolish all direct payments to the officer on this account, and furnish him with railway or motor-car passes to be used only when he travels on public business. These passes must be made strictly non-transferable by the simple device of affixing the officer's photograph, as on a passport, to such Travelling passes. Even so, the haltage allowance would remain ; but that could not be made such a rich source of abuse, as the Travelling Allowances proper are.

House Allowance ; Headquarters Allowance ; Acting and Personal Allowances ; Local Allowance ; Grain Compensation Allowance, not to mention marriage allowance, or special pay in special posts, all these add substantially to the advant-

age of the public service to the servant, and the burdens of public administration upon the people. Evaluation of all these advantages in cash is not always possible, nor, when possible, accurate. But the mere fact that there are such advantages ought to suffice for the main theme of this brochure, that the Public Service of this country is unduly costly, and constitutes an excessive, intolerable drain upon our national economy.

## **V. Indirect Disadvantages of Public Service to the People**

These are numerous and substantial advantages of Public Service to the Servants, which are not proportionately counterbalanced by the service they render to the country. The Services do, indeed, obtain a measure of personal independence and security, which would, if the Members so choose, enable them to stand up against any illegal or inequitable demands of the Executive. In a country torn by communalism, and with Political Leaders still lacking in the necessary experience, knowledge and traditions of public business, such a fortified position to the high-placed permanent Public Servant would have its own advantages to the country. But the actual record of the Indian Public Servant, in any Department of State, does not reveal, in comparison to corresponding elements in other countries, either any originality, penetration, or close knowledge of the subject they are supposed to be specialists in or even a remarkable enthusiasm for the welfare of the people they govern. Objectively considered, the Indian Public Service has not produced a single administrative genius, social thinker, or even a highgrade bureaucratic machine. Every time that a new departure in policy, a new avenue of state activity, was decided upon, they have to invite foreign experts to advise them. The Indian officials are themselves so denationalised, that they

cannot correct the foreign expert's essentially alien viewpoint, and therefore often unsuitable recommendations, by applying knowledge of local conditions to adapt the new policy to local requirement. Their denationalisation in thought and life prevents them from even appreciating that peculiarities of local conditions demand modifications of social theories or economic expedients, which may have proved fruitful in other countries, under different conditions. Their outlook moreover, is essentially narrow, confined by tradition, and regulated by deference to seniority which is often a synonym for senility. Under these conditions, the value received by the country in return for the high prices paid for these services is disproportionately low.

### INDIRECT ADVANTAGES TO THE PUBLIC SERVANTS

The advantages, however, to the Public Servant are not limited by the salaries, allowances, and pensions he is guaranteed. Even if we disregard the claims to titles and honorific distinctions, which are accorded under more or less definite conventions, and which have their own utility in the official career and future prospects of a public servant, there are possibilities of innumerable contacts being established during the period of service with captains of industries and masters of finance, which assure gilt-edged opportunities for such an official's children and dependents. Even for himself, the chances of still more handsome jobs in the Indian States, or Concessionaire Corporations working in India, are too well-known to demand further emphasis. Retiring with a handsome Pension, not to mention the substantial savings that any reasonably careful officer can easily make in the course of his service, the Public Officer in India can enjoy more than a competence during his own span of life, and leave a decent fortune for his children after him,

## VI. Concrete Suggestions

Even a brief review of the subject like this suffices to show that, taken collectively, the Public Services in India are excessively costly; and no real relief can be obtained by the people, unless and until that burden is substantially reduced. It will not do—(1) merely to insist upon wholesale Indianisation, though that, of course, is an indispensable preliminary to real economy. But even if every post in every department in the service of the country is reserved for and given to Indians, the burdensome nature of the present services would not be modified by an iota, unless the scale of salaries is radically revised and substantially lowered.

(2) It would also not suffice to make cheeseparing economies by introducing temporary percentage cuts in a passing emergency, as they did in 1931-32. What is needed is a wholesale reduction in the scales of salaries and allowances in superior branches, from 25 per cent. at the entrance stage to 50 per cent. in the highest ranks, subject to an absolute maximum of Rs. 1,000 per month in all administrative, judicial and executive posts. Even the Viceroy, Governors, Ministers, Judges, or Generals, should not receive anything above this maximum though the peculiar burdens of their high offices may be lightened by providing, as they now do only too liberally, residence, clerical and professional assistance and advice, conveyance, and entertainment charges, as Britain grants to her Ambassadors or France to her President or Prefects. If this reform is accomplished, the country can save at one stroke perhaps 30 crores per annum to fructify her new industry. This saving can be accomplished even if we insist, as we must, upon irreducible minimum living wage for public servants of the lowest ranks. This

will also give the public servant a decent standard of comfortable living, and all the necessities of life indispensable for the efficient discharge of his public duties.

(3) We must, next, insist upon the abolition of the statutory exemption from the Indian Income Tax to Leave Allowances and Pensions drawn out of India, and immediately discontinue the Exchange compensation allowance. The scale of leave and conditions of retirement or superannuation pension must also be similarly revised. Savings to the public purse from these sources may aggregate easily a crore per annum and may probably be much more, especially if we tax differentially, and at higher rates, any portion of a Public Servant's income or Pension, drawn out of the country, on the same lines as they do in Britain in connection with "Unearned Incomes."

(4) Initial recruitment should, however, be wherever possible, by open Competitive Tests, held in India. The rights of minorities to proportionate share in the Public Services may be guaranteed by selecting for appointment candidates from each such community, who, having submitted themselves to such tests, do not rank high enough to be selected automatically, but who rank next in order of merit and are the best from their own community, till such point as the guaranteed proportion of posts is satisfied.

(5) The demand for Indianisation, dictated as it is on political as well as economic considerations, need not be repeated, as the principle has been accepted even by the present Government. The difference as regards the rate of progress; and as regards the treatment of such non-Indians as are already in the Service, is, though largely a question of detail, likely to cause the greatest hardship to the country.



(6) Whatever the eventual decision on the last preceding point, the responsible Indian Government of the future must demand full control over all the services in the country, for reasons of national integrity as well as administrative efficiency. The ways and means of achieving this reform would tax to the utmost the ingenuity of the Indian politician of this generation.

If these reforms are effected, the immediate saving to the Public Purse may aggregate some 30 crores per annum at least; and the national economy may be promoted, industry revived and agriculture rehabilitated, employment assured and social security provided, in a manner and to a degree of which there is no general appreciation to-day.

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